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Abstract

Continues to explore Spenserian parallels in the Space Trilogy, following his work on Perelandra in Mythlore #123. Traces *The Faerie Queene's* clear influence on *That Hideous Strength*, particularly on the characters and relationship of Mark and Jane Studdock, drawing a line connecting Spenser's intent that his poem should "fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline" to Lewis's point in *The Abolition of Man* that modern education produces "men without chests." Spenser's Amoret and Scudamour particularly parallel Mark and Jane, and Busirane's castle as a source for Belbury.

Additional Keywords

Lewis, C.S.—Characters—Jane Studdock; Lewis, C.S.—Characters—Mark Studdock; Lewis, C.S. *The Abolition of Man*; Lewis, C.S. *That Hideous Strength*—Sources; Spenser, Edmund—Characters—Amoret; Spenser, Edmund—Characters—Scudamour; Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*—Influence on C.S. Lewis



SPENSERIAN RETURNS TO EARTH:
The Faerie Queene IN
That Hideous Strength

PAUL R. ROVANC

IN A PREVIOUS *Mythlore* ARTICLE ENTITLED "A SPENSERIAN IN SPACE," I argued that C.S. Lewis's *Perelandra* builds around the Red Cross Knight's quest in Book I of Edmund Spenser's sixteenth-century romance-epic poem, *The Faerie Queene*. Readers may wish to consult that article first, as it makes the case for Lewis's use of *The Faerie Queene* in at least one novel in his Space Trilogy,¹ as well as providing orientation for those unfamiliar with Spenser's poem and Lewis's long relationship with it. In the spirit of Lewis's final prefatory remark to readers of *That Hideous Strength*, however, the present article, too, "can be read on its own" (Preface 8).

In that Preface to the final book of his trilogy, Lewis calls the narrative a "fairy-tale" that, as he elaborates, "has behind it a serious 'point' which I have tried to make in my *Abolition of Man*" (7), his book-length essay in which he castigates modern education for producing "men without chests" (34), humans who are incomplete because their learned, and just as importantly, *felt*, values are wanting. That Lewis's third interplanetary novel works through the medium of fairy-tale romance to display those values aligns it with Spenser's aims, as stated in his prefatory *Letter to Raleigh*, "to *fashion* a gentleman or noble person in vertuous² and gentle discipline" (714; italics added) through what may be described as a fairy-tale romance-epic entitled *The Faerie Queene*. Both authors, in prefacing their narratives with a declaration that their fiction intends to convey a body of imaginative understanding which their audience requires to achieve human wholeness (Spenser's operative word being "to fashion"—Latin *facere*, 'to make'), are postulating a prime goal of myth, for it is myth that restores the excluded middle, the 'chest,' to complete and integrate the self. Or, as Lewis puts it, "The Chest—Magnanimity—Sentiment—these are the indispensable liaison officers between cerebral man and visceral man. It may even be said that it is by this middle element that man is man: for by his intellect he is a mere spirit and by his appetite mere

¹ Also known as the Ransom Trilogy and the Cosmic Trilogy.

² The original spellings are retained in all quotations from Spenser.

animal" (34). For Lewis, as he declares in his landmark work on medieval courtly love literature, *The Allegory of Love*, Spenser was "the great mediator between the Middle Ages and the modern poets, the man who saved us from the catastrophe of too thorough a renaissance" (359-60). As Spenser seeks to "fashion" human virtue in his readers by bringing them into fresh contact with classical and medieval writers such as Homer, Virgil, Dante, Chaucer, and Malory, so Lewis—"eager," as Robert Boenig describes him in his professorial role, "to convert his students to the delights of medieval thought" (144)—seeks to restore his readers' chests by reacquainting them with a too-often neglected body of thought and literature via that "great mediator" between not just eras, but worlds.³

While the influence of Spenser's Book I was central to my discussion of *Perelandra*, much inspiration and material for *That Hideous Strength: A Modern Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups* derives from Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene*—particularly the lovers' trials of Amoret and Scudamour,⁴ who must both learn how to give and accept love. Other meaningful Spenserian connections in the final work of Lewis's trilogy include the novelist's use of symbolically contrastive venues and his treatments of two specific contrapuntal themes: nature versus art, and visionary versus quotidian England. Deeper than these corroborating details, however, are the two authors' intentions underlying those particulars—to "fashion a gentleman," to restore the chest, by engaging readers in the quests of characters pursuing

³ I mean to suggest here not just the medieval world but also Spenser's "delightfull land of Faery" (VI.Proem.1.2). See my "Spenserian in Space," pp. 33, 41, 51. The poet's treatment of Faerie as an alternative parallel world to historical England is also discussed later in this essay.

⁴ That a protagonist of Lewis's unfinished *Dark Tower* is named Scudamour seems relevant to this point, particularly if, as Jared C. Lobdell argues, "that book fits not only as a first attempt at following up *Out of the Silent Planet*, but as a first attempt at a middle work between *Out of the Silent Planet* and *That Hideous Strength*" (230). If Lobdell is right, it may be possible to see *The Dark Tower* (otherwise known as "the time fragment") as a preliminary sketch for some features of *That Hideous Strength*. Lobdell predicts from the extant fragment that "Scudamour will be a knight rescuing the true Camilla" (225). While Jane's rescuing Mark would be a more accurate description of the outcome of *That Hideous Strength*, and while Camilla in that novel becomes the better-adjusted wife of Arthur Denniston, it's not at all hard to imagine that Lewis changed the too-transparently Spenserian name of Scudamour to the more suitably modern (but also evocatively Arthurian) Mark in *That Hideous Strength*. This line of reasoning also helps to quell doubts about Lewis's authorship of the fragment. (See Lobdell 230-31 and 231n24.) For a forger to have recognized the previously unnoted connection between Mark and Scudamour that I argue for in this article would at least require him to have been an unusually perceptive reader of both Spenser and Lewis.

their own processes of integration—or, as Spenser puts it, by means of “an historicall fiction,” which is for him a very free reworking of “the historye of king Arthure” (a theme creatively adapted by Lewis too) that his audience will “delight to read, rather for variety of matter, then [i.e., ‘than’] for profite of the ensample” (*Letter* 715). This is “the pedagogical function” of myth, which Joseph Campbell succinctly defines as showing “how to live a human lifetime under any circumstances” (31), a universal endeavor at which neither Spenser’s nor Lewis’s heroines can be described as thriving at their stories’ respective outsets.

That Hideous Strength opens with Jane Studdock cynically recalling *The Book of Common Prayer*’s description of matrimony as existing “for the mutual society, help, and comfort that the one ought to have of the other” (13). “In reality,” she “bitterly” reflects, “marriage had proved to be the door out of a world of work and comradeship and laughter and innumerable things to do, into something like solitary confinement” (13). She has seen less of Mark in the six months since their wedding than for years before it, causing her to muse that “‘being in love’ must mean totally different things to men and women” (13). Absorbed in his career as a junior faculty member at Bracton College, “Even when he was at home he hardly ever talked. He was always either sleepy or intellectually preoccupied” (13).

Jane’s isolation and unhappiness in marriage and Mark’s dereliction of his role as husband parallel the situation of Amoret and Scudamour in Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene*. Book IV retrospectively recounts Scudamour’s initial winning of Amoret by overcoming twenty knights in a tournament (x.7-10). Though quite capable of winning her in combat, Scudamour has yet to learn of proper wooing: “For from the time that *Scudamour* her bought / In perilous fight, she neuer ioyed day” (i.2.1-2), since she has been abducted from the very midst of the wedding festivities by the “vile Enchauntour *Busyran*” (3.1-3). The fact that Scudamour does not prevent this act and is unable to rescue her, requiring instead the intervention of the chaste lady knight Britomart, belies some defect in him and the character of his love. (Lewis might even call him a knight without a chest.) While she spends “Seuen moneths [...] in bitter smart” (4.1, cf. III.xi.10.8), Scudamour pronounces his *mea culpa*: “Yet thou vile man, [...] art sound, / Ne canst her ayde, ne canst her foe dismay” (III.xi.11.6-7). During this period, Amoret is captive to a world of fears and psychological torments stemming from her own misconceptions about the nature of love. Scudamour (whose name, ironically at this point, means “Shield of Love,” which “he has cast away” [Brill 635]) can neither comprehend nor enter this inner prison where he has effectively placed her through his inability conduct their relationship beyond the rough wooing of a tournament victory, followed by his forced abduction of her from the Temple

of Venus (IV.x.57-58). Like Jane, for whom marriage to Mark has proved to be "a door [...] into something like solitary confinement" (13), Amoret is imprisoned behind an "yron dore" (xi.54.7) or "yron wicket" (xii.3.3) deep within Busirane's stronghold.

The crux of Amoret's fear is symbolized by the "brasen pillour" to which she is bound "with yron bands" (III.xii.30.8-9) in Busirane's inner chamber. This pillar bears obvious phallic significance, as does Scudamour's spear with which he "rap[s]" the Shield of Love to initiate fierce combat with twenty knights for Amoret (IV.x.9.4); A.C. Hamilton comments that "Amoret is bound by what she fears to what she fears" (403n30.8). The "yron bands," however, suggest not only her dread of male sexuality, but also the strictures of male domination or even the bonds of wedlock, both of which Jane implicitly loathes. "To avoid entanglements and interferences," Lewis's narrator relates,

had long been one of her first principles. Even when she had discovered that she was going to marry Mark if he asked her, the thought, "But I must still keep up my own life," had arisen at once and had never for more than a few minutes at a stretch been absent from her mind. Some resentment against love itself, and therefore against Mark for thus *invading* her life, remained. [...] Though she did not formulate it, this fear of being *invaded* and entangled was the deepest ground of her determination not to have a child [...]. (72-73; italics added)

Amoret's fear of the penetrating phallus, also signified in the arras of Busirane's House, in which "lurked priuily" a pattern of woven gold "Like to a discoloured Snake" armed with "hidden snares" (III.xi.28.2-9), suggests anxieties comparable to Jane's of having her life "invaded and entangled" by a man. Moreover, Jane dreads the naturally accompanying "entanglements and interferences" of having children.

Jane's self-preservation has far-reaching consequences for which Merlin exposes her as "the falsest lady of any at this time alive" (278), comparing her self-imposed barrenness to "the stroke that Balinus struck" (the Dolorous Stroke of the Grail legend), since "she and her lord should between them have begotten a child by whom the enemies should have been put out of Logres for a thousand years" (278). But now, Merlin prophesies, "the hour of its begetting is passed" (278). In her avoidance of progeny Jane inverts the role of Spenser's Britomart, who seeks Artegall⁵ to become founder of a line of

⁵ Artegall's name suggests "'equal [to] Arthur'" (Anderson, "Artegall" 62), a meaning significant for Lewis's development of the Pendragon myth in which chosen figures fill Arthur's place in history by taking his familial title. Although Jane fails to bring forth the

British rulers culminating in Elizabeth. Here the connection is telling, for while Briotmart stands at the very nascence of the royal line in all its potency, Jane stands at its exhausted butt end, her maiden name having been Tudor, though “she was very anxious not to be supposed vain of her ancient ancestry” (65).⁶ With her modern fears and ideals she threatens to extinguish the very line her epic counterpart has initiated.

The conception in question, however, is not only physical but also visionary, and at this latter Jane still has a prospect, which is again, to her consternation, contingent on her giving up her right to herself. Like her Warwickshire ancestor who dreamed accurately about the battle of Worcester (65), Jane has been experiencing dreams precisely reflecting experiments of the N.I.C.E. (National Institute for Coordinated Experiments) with the severed scientist-convict Alcasan’s head, which the sinister organization has been keeping alive as the linchpin of its totalitarian socio-scientific engineering agenda. While Britomart’s vision of Artegall in Merlin’s looking glass (III.ii.18-19, 24 ff) and of their future royal progeny in Merlin’s Cave (iii.22-50) anticipate her generating of a great civilization anchored in the Tudor dynasty, Jane’s terrifying visions are a potential vehicle for saving and regenerating what remains of that civilization grounded in traditional values which Jane herself can hardly be said to hold, even though she is an aspiring Donne scholar.⁷ Therefore, although as Merlin pronounces, the destined hour for her

next Pendragon, it seems clear that Camilla Denniston, who is pregnant at the end of the novel and whose husband is named Arthur, will (Sammons 65). Camilla is also a warrior princess from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, as Spenser’s Britomart (‘martial Briton’ [Anderson, “Britomart” 113]) is a lady knight. Lewis’s Camilla ‘rescues’ Jane through both stable friendship and surrogate motherhood; Spenser’s Britomart rescues Amoret from a life of disturbed isolation and barrenness.

⁶ The Tudors, on the other hand, proudly claimed Arthurian ancestry (Rovang, *Refashioning* 83-84). By means of such an allusion to the poem’s genealogical emphasis, Lewis, via Spenser, pointedly criticizes Jane’s phony egalitarianism with its disregard for lineage.

⁷ In *The Discarded Image* Lewis comments that he “freely illustrate[s] features of the [old] Model” of the universe “from Spenser, Donne or Milton” because it “still underlies their work” (13). If we consider John Donne along with Spenser as data of contrast for modern attitudes of the last novel’s characters, and consider the extent to which Lewis also applies the framework of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* to *Perelandra*, it becomes clearer that an important underlying goal of the trilogy is to restore vital aspects of a mythic image of the cosmos which, as Lewis’s title implies, has been “discarded” by moderns. T.A. Shippey identifies “to challenge modern cosmology and offer an alternative view of the universe” as a “positive goal” in Lewis’s creating of the Ransom Trilogy (237). Spenser develops a mythologized vision of the cosmos most expansively in his *Cantos of Mutabilitie*, which close the uncompleted *Faerie Queene*. In his scholarship Lewis

conception of a savior-child has passed, the possibility of her visionary conception of saving knowledge still hangs in the balance.

This prospect, too, however, is threatened both by Jane's disbelief in her own clairvoyance and by her unwillingness to surrender to anything or anyone outside herself, namely the party of friends surrounding the Earth-returned Dr. Ransom who stand in opposition to the N.I.C.E.: "If you don't give yourself to us," warns Camilla Denniston, "the enemy [i.e. the N.I.C.E.] will use you" (115). At the words "give yourself to us," we are told, "The very muscles of Jane's body stiffened a little" (115). This instance in the plot widens the question of Jane's surrender of herself beyond gender roles in marriage to that of alliances in a cosmic battle. The characters at St. Anne's and Belbury must all submit to their respective 'Head', but with clearly different results. As Monika B. Hilder emphasizes, "Submission is not optional, whether for members of St. Anne's or of the N.I.C.E. All are 'feminine' in relation to spiritual power, for good or for evil" (*Gender* 142). By pointing out that Lewis "highlight[s] mutual deference as opposed to one-sided 'submission'" in both Jane and Mark's growth as characters, Stephen Elmore addresses objections that Lewis is merely espousing traditional gender hierarchies, for Mark "also learns that he must have humility and submission in his love for her [Jane]" (116). Hilder concurs in commenting, on the one hand, that Jane's "new humility as a moral agent allows love and life to flourish," while on the other, she remarks, "I know of *no better example in literature* of repairing male chauvinism as [sic] in the transformation of Mark from selfish arrogance to loving meekness" ("Jack" 182; italics added).⁸ Elmore identifies as "One of the core problems in the novel [...] that both Jane and Mark see marriage in terms of power and ownership" (116). Only as both characters "submit to Venus or Charity," in Hilder's words, "can [each] receive the other" (*Gender* 157). This principle applies not only to Jane and Mark, but to each character in the story,

"delighted in an expanding Middle Ages, colonizing the Renaissance with medieval values and ideas," according to Boenig, even "declaring the medieval model of the cosmos a work of art" (144). As the above-quoted passage from *The Discarded Image* suggests, however, Lewis did not so much *colonize* the Renaissance as *recognize* the lasting impact of the Middle Ages to a point that diminished any real separation between the two periods. Conversely, one might say that Lewis seeks in much of his work to 'colonize' the modern world "with medieval values and ideas." Along with Tolkien, asserts Boenig, "Lewis has become a major portal through which new generations of readers and now even moviegoers may pass through imaginative borders and discover anew the delights of the Middle Ages" (144).

⁸ In this quotation Hilder is even bolder than in her earlier work, *The Gender Dance*, where she writes, "I know of *no other example in contemporary English literature* which so overtly criticizes male chauvinism as Lewis does in the evolution of Mark Studdock from egocentric chauvinist to loving husband" (155; italics added).

for, as Ransom explains to Jane, "What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it" (316). While the N.I.C.E. members' exchange of this spiritual-ethical concept for its diabolical counterfeit, submission to their 'Head' and the dark power behind it, renders their organization's acronym doubly ironic, St. Anne's, by contrast, constitutes "Lewis's prototype of theological feminism, and all of her members, from Ransom on, illustrate this concept," writes Hilder (*Gender* 117). What she describes as Lewis's representation across his writings of humans as "eternal beings engaged in a cosmic dance in which the grand ideas of gender are somehow intrinsic" ("Jack" 184) also manifestly describes at least one important facet of *The Faerie Queene's* resplendent vision of human meaning.

The relentless impingement of the female protagonist's visions of Alcasan, emerging into a chilling waking encounter, is what finally drives Jane to join the party at St. Anne's: "It was something different from fear (though she was frightened too, almost to the point of nausea) that drove her so unerringly forward. It was a total rejection of, and revulsion from, this man on all levels of her being at once" (137). Here again, Jane inverts Britomart's seeking out of the man she has seen only in a vision, and resembles Amoret and Florimell⁹ in their respective flights from men with their perceived, and sometimes very real, intentions.

Jane's flight to St. Anne's to escape the influence of Belbury, the N.I.C.E. headquarters, reflects another Spenserian feature of *That Hideous*

⁹ As another contrasting character in Books III-IV, Florimell provides additional perspective on love and its perils. She and her beloved Marinell, though their trials are beyond the scope of this essay, provide one example of how Spenser, much like Lewis, develops characters, couples, and communities that structurally parallel, contrast, and thus interpret one another. In a delightful variation on this pattern, Spenser features a False Florimell, created by a witch for her loutish son who unsuccessfully tries to win the true Florimell, much as Lewis features a false Merlin to distract the N.I.C.E.'s Wither and Frost in their attempt to acquire the true Merlin. Whether Lewis deliberately devised this parallel or not, it nicely demonstrates the two authors' similarity in pattern and method. Sanford Schwartz's comment—"the face-to-face encounter between Merlin and his unsuspecting double underscores the relationship of the original to its parodic copy that has come to define the terms of engagement between St. Anne's and Belbury" (133)—highlights the continuity between Lewis's development by contrast of not only characters but places, the topic of my following paragraphs. Boenig also infers that Lewis's false Merlin is an anachronism like that of T.H. White's *Once and Future King* (126-27) and argues that Lewis's true Merlin is intended to "de-trivialize and re-medievalize" the great druid in answer to White (130). A further related example would be how Spenser's Merlin contrasts with the false enchanter Busirane. The visions of Merlin's Cave and looking glass provide strong contrast to the barren images of perverted love featured in the House of Busirane.

Strength: symbolically contrasting venues, part of what Richard L. Purtill calls (without mentioning Spenser) “an intricate and detailed opposition of scenes and characters” in the novel (91). Belbury and St. Anne’s are not strictly modeled on any particular houses or castles in *The Faerie Queene*, but they inversely reflect each other in ways similar to, for example, the Houses of Pride and of Holiness. While Belbury is itself a garbled corruption of Babel, the House of Pride is, like the Tower of Babel, “built of squared bricke” with high walls and “many loftie towres” (I.iv.4.1-6; Gen. 11:3). But its foundations are weak, its brickwork is “cunningly [...] without mortar laid” (4.2) [making it, ironically, even less stable than its biblical prototype], and its “hinder partes, that few could spie, / Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly” (5.8-9). By pointed contrast to the House of Pride—whose “gates” “to all [...] stood open wide” (6.2)—“the dore [...] fast lockt” to the House of Holiness, where Red Cross Knight is rehabilitated, requires all those entering to “passe in stouping low; / For streight and narrow was the way” (x.5.1, 8-9), but having “entred in a spatious court they see” (6.2).

In contrasting the novel’s two settings, Dorothy F. Lane observes, again with no reference to Spenser, that while “the world of Belbury [...] appears bigger from the outside than it actually is [...] the Georgian house at St. Anne’s, like the Stable in [Lewis’s] *The Last Battle*, is bigger from the inside than from the outside” (11). As suggested by Spenser’s repetition of “cunningly” quoted above (iv.4.2; 5.9), the House of Pride’s thin veneer of “rich array and costly arras” (6.6) simply disguises a trap, from which Redcrosse, like Mark, barely escapes with not just his life, but his soul. At Jane’s entry into St. Anne’s, Lewis, like Spenser, alludes to Matthew 7:13-14, where Jesus exhorts his hearers to “Enter in at the strait gate” because it “leadeth unto life.” Spenser’s interpretation, “Each goodly thing is hardest to begin” (x.6.1), is certainly borne out in Jane’s first visit to St. Anne’s, where the stern young woman who answers the gate, “neither opening the door any further nor standing aside,” explains, “There’s not room for two on this path so you must excuse me if I go first” (61). Although Jane revolts at learning she must give up her right to herself to join St. Anne’s, in accepting that surrender she finds life-expanding freedom, understanding, and inner strength, goods that Mark loses by the day as he seeks inclusion in the N.I.C.E.’s inner circle.

Belbury, a confusingly departmentalized bureaucracy in which Mark anxiously gropes to find his place, gradually compromising each of his principles to become by semi-conscious increments one of its pawns, is headed by the detached Wither but actually run by the ruthless police chief Fairy Hardcastle. As the N.I.C.E. headquarters, it is the intended radiating center for a global scientific police state, the nightmare of modern dystopian writers. Bill Hingest, a Bracton colleague who after passing through the initial formalities

decides to withdraw from the organization, warns Mark: "'You'll do yourself no good by getting mixed up with the N.I.C.E.'" (72). Hingest soon turns up murdered, by the N.I.C.E. police we later learn. Mark is not so astute as Spenser's Red Cross Knight, who, guided by his dwarf, "vnderneath the castell wall, / A Donghill of dead carcasses he spyde, / The dreadfull spectacle of that sad house of *Pryde*" (I.v.53.7-9). While having no dwarf, Mark does have a Hingest, whose warning goes unheeded. Mark's soporific drift into N.I.C.E. enslavement exhibits a less domestic way in which he is "an excellent sleeper" (14). Lewis's narrator also describes the numbly doomed Wither as one of those "So full of sleep [...] at the time when they leave the right way" (353). Marsha Daigle-Williamson recognizes this line as "a paraphrase of *Inferno* 1.11-12, in which Dante's pilgrim says, 'I was so full of sleep at the point when I abandoned the true path'" (105). Daigle-Williamson also notes the parallelism between Dante's Hell and Belbury as places which no one leaves: "when Mark is falsely accused of Hingest's death, Belbury literally becomes his prison" (104). Eventually, however, Mark, like Dante the pilgrim—and like Red Cross Knight from *Lucifera's Castle*—escapes.

Daigle-Williamson's observation on Dante raises the important point that Lewis is not simply drawing on a single major template for his tale, any more than did either Spenser or Dante. Boenig, who calls "Lewis's muse" "a reactive one" (79), later explains, "What is criticized [by Owen Barfield and Humphrey Carpenter] as pastiche is often Lewis's debate with his prior sources, with Lewis appropriating the prior text inside his own" (145). This tendency of medieval authors is seen no less in Lewis than in Spenser, whose Red Cross Knight also retraces Dante's journey. Like Dante, who awakens "in a dark wood, / for I had wandered off from the straight path" (*Inf.* I.2-3), Redcrosse and Una stray into "the wandering wood" (I.i.13.6), where "They cannot finde that path, which first was showne, / But wander too and fro in waies vnknowne" (10.4-5) that soon bring them to "Errours den" (13.6). Before long their mazy paths lead the two on separate journeys which, much like Mark and Jane's, eventuate in a lovers' reconciliation bearing profoundly cosmic implications.¹⁰ Redcrosse's path leads through *Lucifera's House* of

¹⁰ Red Cross Knight's betrothal to Una at the end of Book I is an allegorical foreshadowing of the marriage of Christ and the Church. Following the hero's victory over the Satanic dragon (discussed in my earlier *Mythlore* article [Rovang, "Spenserian" 45-50]), Una's father commands that after fulfilling six years of "warlike" service to Gloriana, "Ye then shall hether backe retourne agayne, / The marriage to accomplish vovd betwixt you twayn" (I.xii.18.7, 19.8-9). In his note on stanza 19, Hamilton quotes the Geneva Bible's gloss on Revelation 19:7: "'God made Christ the bridgrome of his Church at the beginning, and at the last day it shalbe fully accomplished when we shal be ioyned with our head'" (151n19.9). Lewis's contemporizing of this allegory in the

Pride, whose basement becomes indistinguishable from the classical Underworld upon which Dante draws from Virgil, and which is also the inevitable destiny of Lucifera's courtiers, as foreshadowed by the dungeon's occupants who "Fell from high Princes courtes, or Ladies bowres" (I.v.51.6). The sad fate of the N.I.C.E.'s hangers-on eventually comes to resemble that seen in this piece of Spenser's anti-courtly satire, for Belbury is the dystopian modern power center that replaces the aristocratic courts of old.

St. Anne's and Belbury are where Jane and Mark part ways, the former place being all the latter is not—communal, agrarian, life affirming. The contrast between them also invokes the first of two thematic dichotomies: the natural versus the artificial. As Jane enters St. Anne's for the first time she passes fruit trees and gooseberry bushes; assorted farm buildings housing plants and animals; and "a little lawn with a see-saw in the middle of it" (61). In vital contrast to Belbury, this setting overflows with spontaneous fecundity. Either Lewis nods or all seasons live simultaneously here, for the narrator mentions "rose bushes, all stiff and prickly in their winter garb" and then conveys Jane's mental response to the "very large garden" containing them:

like the garden in *Peter Rabbit*. Or was it like the garden in the *Romance of the Rose*? [...] Or like the garden on the top of some Mesopotamian ziggurat which had probably given rise to the whole legend of Paradise? Or simply like all walled gardens? (61-62)

This musing leads Jane into reflections, again conditioned by her reading, on the feminine symbolism of such gardens, musings from which she suddenly recoils: "what frightful nonsense she had been thinking for the last minute or so! She shook off all these ideas about gardens and determined to pull herself together. A curious feeling that she was now on hostile, or at least alien, ground warned her to keep all her wits about her" (62). As David C. Downing observes regarding her abrupt response, "the hostility Jane senses is within her, not around her" (81). She implicitly recognizes the garden at St. Anne's as reflecting the same archetype of fruitful interdependence as seen in Spenser's Garden of Adonis. She therefore willfully breaks off contemplation toward a paradigm that threatens her own agenda of independence and self-preservation. The haunt of Venus and nurturing ground of Amoret, "In all the lore of loue, and goodly womanhead" (III.vi.51.9), Spenser's Garden is "the first seminary / Of all things, that are borne to liue and dye" (30.4-5), teeming

figures of such mundane worldlings as Mark and Jane Studdock may suggest that every faithful uniting of man and woman reflects the mystical union of Christ and the Church. Paul says as much in Ephesians 5:25-27, to which Spenser alludes in describing Una's garment as "withoutten spot" in xii.22.7.

with reproductive life, its *Genius* "attend[ed]" by "A thousand thousand naked babes" (32.3).

In their natural fecundity and freedom (44.2-3) St. Anne's and the Garden of Adonis stand in parallel contradistinction to Belbury and Acrasia's Bower of Bliss. Joe McClatchey summarizes that according to Lewis's "major categories" in *Spenser's Images of Life*, "images of love as natural appetite appear as the Garden of Adonis (purely and simply natural) and the Bower of Bliss (artificial)" (168-69; cf. Lewis 45). This Spenserian iconography certainly finds its way not only into Lewis's criticism but into his novel. Purtil outlines (in reverse order) this nature-artifice dichotomy evident in Lewis's two settings:

The image of the world which Belbury wants to make is the cold sterile moon, imagined as inhabited by a race which has denied its organic component, which feeds and even procreates by artificial means. The image of the world which St. Anne's wants is the Venus of Lewis's earlier book *Perelandra*, envisioned as an Eden where the humanlike inhabitants live in harmony with nature [...]. (95)

In contrast with the Garden of Adonis Spenser sets Acrasia's Bower, a place of fruitless lust and sterile sex, where "Art, as halfe in scorne / Of niggard Nature, like a pompous bride" (II.xii.50.6-7) condescendingly triumphs. The Bower's beauty, which appears to improve nature, is, on second glance, lifeless metal:

A trayle of yuie in his natiue hew:
For the rich mettall was so coloured,
That wight, who did not well auis'd it vew,
Would surely deeme it to bee yuie trew. (61.2-5)

In *Spenser's Images of Life*, Lewis qualifies, "Not of course that there is anything wrong with Art in itself. But the Bower is not Art putting itself forward as Art; it is Art trying to deceive, Art substituted for Nature" (46).¹¹ Belbury's program under the N.I.C.E. is to create a world where mind sheds its dependency on biological life and all physical features are synthetic. As Filostrato, the physiologist responsible for maintaining Alcasan's severed head, explains, "The forest tree is a weed" (172). He envisions a superior artifice: "Light, made

¹¹ Lewis also notes that Scudamour "finds an ideal combination of Nature and Art" in the island setting of the Temple of Venus (*Spenser's* 39). The House of Busirane and the Temple of Venus both have in common, Lewis points out, "that they are products of Art. The first is entirely Art, and the second Nature and Art in happy symbiosis" (45).

of aluminum. So natural, it would even deceive" (172). Finally, when a "chemical substitute" is developed, Filostrato effuses, "I foresee nothing but the *art* tree all over the earth. In fact, we *clean* the planet" (172).

Filostrato—ironically, obese—expounds the organization's eventual goal: "Learn to make our brains live with less and less body: learn to build our bodies directly with chemicals, no longer have to stuff them full of dead brutes and weeds. Learn how to reproduce ourselves without copulation" (173). On this last point, Filostrato (again with fitting irony, a eunuch) elucidates a principle understood by dystopian writers like Orwell and Huxley: "There will never be peace and order and discipline so long as there is sex. When man has thrown it away, then he will become finally governable" (173). Spenser's Legend of Temperance depicts the moral turpitude and incapacitation wrought on Verdant by the lecherous charms of Acrasia (II.xi.79-82) as one of many variations on sexuality in the poem as a whole. Rather than abolishing it altogether, a goal incidentally never fulfilled in the novel, Acrasia perverts sex from its naturally reproductive function into an artificial instrument of control—Verdant's name reflects his vegetative state. The N.I.C.E. wants "'geldings and oxen'" rather than "stallions and bull" (173) toward the same end—control. The most advanced state of disembodied intellect that the N.I.C.E. manages to produce before, much like Acrasia's Bower by Sir Guyon, it is dismantled by the party of St. Anne's through Merlin's real magic, is the artificially vivified head of the wife-killing Arab radiologist Alcasan. Although Filostrato calls it "the first of the New Men—the first that lives beyond animal life" (177), it proves in the end not to be the immortalized mind of the executed scientist, but rather a deceptive medium for a malign extraterrestrial intelligence.

The contrast in values represented by Belbury and St. Anne's expresses itself as a battle for Jane's and Mark's souls, as well as for England's, again in a manner reminiscent of, say, the Houses of Pride and Holiness with regard to Red Cross Knight, who is also, as St. George, England; or of Busirane's Castle and the Temple of Venus with regard not only to Amoret but to Womanhood (allegorically personified therein) itself. Camilla Denniston tells Jane regarding the company of St. Anne's: "This house, all of us here [...] are all that's left of the Logres:¹² all the rest has become merely Britain" (195).

¹² From *Loegr*, the Welsh name for England (Dixon-Kennedy 268). In medieval Arthurian literature, however, Norris J. Lacy qualifies, "Logres is probably to be identified as England, but it is primarily a poetic creation, the sometimes vague locus of adventure and romance" (339). This lack of certainty regarding its geography makes it an apt counterpart for Spenser's Fairyland—visionary space. Spenser quips that some will judge his history a "painted forgery," since "none, that breatheth liuing aire, does know, / Where is that happy land of Faery" (II.Proem.1.4, 6-7). Yet, until recently, he reminds

That Hideous Strength continues to develop this thematic distinction between Logres and Britain, paralleling that between the realm of Faerie and historical England in *The Faerie Queene*. What is happening to the campus of Bracton College in Edgestow, whose beauty outshines both Oxford and Cambridge (16), under the operations of the N.I.C.E. foreshadows the brave new Britain being imposed by Belbury. From beyond the closed curtains of the Bracton Fellows Common Room “came such noises as had never been heard in that room before—shouts and curses and the sound of lorries heavily drumming past or harshly changing gear, rattling of chains, drumming of mechanical drills, clanging of iron, whistles, thuddings, and an all pervasive vibration” as “scarcely thirty yards away [...] the conversion of an ancient woodland into an inferno of mud and noise and steel and concrete was already going on apace” (90). As part of the plan to make Edgestow “the second city in the country” (85), the ancient village of Cure Hardy, whose name bears that of the Round Table knight Ozanna le Cure Hardy [Old French, ‘Bold Heart’], is to be flooded by the diverted River Wynd to provide a reservoir for the new metropolis. The quaint village with its “sixteenth-century almshouses and Norman church” is to be replaced by “a new model village [...] four miles away” and renamed “Jules Hardy or Wither Hardy” after one of the visible N.I.C.E. functionaries (85). Mark is sent out with the bloodless Cosser to gather data for a report preliminary to the already determined dismantling of Cure Hardy. “If it’s a beauty spot,” predicts Cosser, “you can bet it’s insanitary” (85).

The N.I.C.E.’s designs and the occult powers behind them are not, however, limited to England. Camilla informs Jane that, just before his disappearance, a renowned Indian mystic called the Sura had concluded “a great danger” to the planet “would actually come to a head in this island” (114). This intelligence and the responsibility for it have been turned over to the Earth-returned Ransom, who now bears the name “Mr. Fisher-King” (114). Like the Arthurian Grail-keeper whose name he inherits, Ransom and his small circle at St. Anne’s bear the interlocked destinies of Christendom, of mankind, and of England. Dr. Cecil Dimple, a literature don at Edgestow’s Northumberland College, who with his wife joins St. Anne’s after being turned out of their house slated for destruction by the N.I.C.E., muses to Camilla:

readers, “Who euer heard of th’Indian *Peru*?/ [...] Or fruitfullest *Virginia* who did euer vew? // Yet all these were when no man did them know” (2.6-3.1). Therefore, the reader, “Of faery lond yet if he more inquire / By certain signes here sett in sondrie place / He may it fynd” (4.1-3). The “signes” are in the text (as discussed below) and in the stars (Hamilton 158n4.1-3). As a preliminary condition for finding Fairyland, therefore, the reader must admit “his sence to bee too blunt and bace” (4.4) for the purpose.

Haven't you noticed that we are two countries? After every Arthur, a Mordred; behind every Milton, a Cromwell: a nation of poets, a nation of shopkeepers; the home of Sidney—and of Cecil Rhodes. Is it any wonder they call us hypocrites? But what they mistake for hypocrisy is really the struggle between Logres and Britain." (369)

Dimble then reveals more palpable evidence that "There has been a secret Logres in the very heart of Britain all these years." That evidence is "an unbroken succession of Pendragons" of which the "old man" to whose deathbed Ransom was summoned to receive the mantle "was the seventy-eighth from Arthur" (369). In every age, Dimble relates, "they [the Pendragons] and the little Logres which gathered round them have been the fingers which gave the tiny shove or the almost imperceptible pull, to prod England out of the drunken sleep or to draw her back from the final outrage into which Britain had tempted her" (369).¹³ Logres is now doing it again.

Nowhere else in English literature do we find the dual concept of a historical and an ideal England developed as we do in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Though Lewis was no doubt inspired in part by the distinction between Logres and Britain in Charles Williams's Arthurian poetry, there Logres does not maintain the simultaneous continuity that it does in Lewis's development of it in conjunction with Britain, or in Spenser's treatment of the land of Faerie in relation to England. In his Preface to *The Region of the Summer Stars*, Williams concludes the "argument" to his lyric cycle: "Logres is overthrown and afterwards becomes the historical Britain, in which the myth of its origin remains" (118). In his *Taliessin through Logres*, following Arthur's death "Logres was withdrawn to Carbonek; it became Britain" (106). It seems clear, therefore, despite the blinking pronoun reference in the second clause of this line, that in Williams Britain supersedes Logres—all that "remains" is "the myth of its

¹³ Lewis's "Britain," writes David A. Branson, "represents the fallen, lesser England, of which the N.I.C.E. is an example" (20). While Dimble seems in this passage to present "England" as a third element over which Logres and Britain contend, he also describes "Logres" as "haunting" (369) and residing "in the very heart of Britain" as a kind of Platonic ideal, much as he appears to be doing in saying, "When Logres really dominates Britain [...] then it will be spring" (370-71). Yet, in the next breath, Dimble says, "We've got Britain down but who knows how long we can hold her down?" as though, once again, Logres and Britain were contending opposites, presumably, again, with England in the middle. Is Dimble (or Lewis?) being inconsistent, or are the two configurations intended to provide alternating ontological perspectives on the nation? In Spenser, too, Fairyland and historical England at times seem to exist simultaneously on separate planes, yet, as discussed below, England *becomes* Fairyland through the visionary empowerment of the reader, proving the latter, again, to be the defining reality at England's true center.

origin." Hence, as Charles Moorman states, in Williams's work, "We see the hope and failure of Logres as a whole" (101), even though in his poetry, adds Moorman, "the theme takes on new meaning and new grandeur from the meaning and grandeur inherent in the myth itself" (101).

In his *Letter to Raleigh*, on the other hand, Spenser renders Faery and present history concurrent on one level by making the sitting monarch also Gloriana, the Queen of Faeries: "In that Faery Queene [...] I conceiue the most excellent and glorious person of our soueraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land," where, he says, Arthur "went to seeke her forth" (716). In the Proem to Book I, Spenser introduces this action into the poem by asking his muse to open to him the history "Of Faerie knights and fayrest *Tanaquill*,¹⁴ / Whom that most noble Briton Prince [Arthur] so long / Sought through the world" (2.3-5). In the Proems to Books I and II, Michael Murrin specifies, "Spenser argues that fairyland mirrors England" (297). As he introduces the quest of Guyon, a "faery knight" (5.7) in the Proem to Book II, the author tells Elizabeth, "In this fayre mirrhour" of his poem (Hamilton 158n4.6-9), "thou [...] maist behold thy face / And thine owne realmes in lond of Faery, / And in this antique ymage thy great auncestry" (4.6-9). Hamilton comments, "The Queen is invited to see her **face** [l. 7] in Belphoebe in canto iii, her **realmes** [l. 8] in 'Briton moniments' (x.5-68), and her **great auncestry** [l. 8] in the 'Antiquitee of Faery lond' (x.70-76)" (158n4.6-9; emphasis in original). In Spenser's poem, Murrin elaborates, "Fairyland functions as a mirror only when the reader interprets the text" (298), which is exactly what the poet is suggesting Elizabeth (and, by implication, the reader) do. In Book II characters also become readers as Prince Arthur and Sir Guyon peruse separate chronicles in the library of Alma's House. The *Briton moniments* (ix.59) selected by Arthur trace what passed as British history during the Middle Ages and well into the Renaissance, from Brutus's conquest of the insular giants to the reign of Uther Pendragon, where the text breaks off, refusing to reveal its royal reader's destiny. Guyon chooses the *Antiquitee of Faery* (ix.60), which traces a mythologized history of Faerie Land, beginning with Prometheus's creation of the first man, whom "he called *Elfe*" (x.71.1), to the reign of "fairest *Tanaquill*," also called "*Glorian*" (x.76.4, 8), whom we know from Book I as the idealized doublet of Elizabeth as the "Queene of Faries" (I.ix.14.9), seen by Prince Arthur in a dream and "Sought through the world" by him ever since (Proem 2.7).

Gloriana, therefore, as an embodiment of the ideal-yet-present England which, to use Lewis's term, "haunts" the historical Britain, is sought by the imaginatively 'historical' Prince Arthur. His vision of her is the guiding inspiration of what will prove to be the glorious exemplar of historical British

¹⁴ aka Gloriana; cf. II.x.76.4, 8.

kingship. Here, all regard for chronology aside in a mythologized frame of reference, the ideal Fairyland informs and shapes the historical Britain, just as Lewis's Logres has always done England, although in the time setting of the novel Britain threatens to completely expunge the former. The little company of St. Anne's is "all that's left of the Logres" (195), but it has never actually died out, and through the offices of Merlin, another who has never actually died, Logres is about to come back with a vengeance. According to Murrin, Spenser alters "the function" of Fairyland's "political fantasy" for earlier writers like the thirteenth-century *Huon of Bordeaux*¹⁵ poet, who has the King of Fairies, Oberon, and "a fairy army come to help the Franks capture 'Babylon' (Cairo). Spenser similarly envisages a war with infidels where Gloriana will help the British confront the Saracens" (297): "And Bryton fields with Sarazin blood bedyde, / Twixt that great faery Queene and Paynim king" (I.xi.7.3-4). Yet, as Murrin remarks, the England of Spenser's day "feared Roman Catholic Spain much more than a distant Saracen power" (297). Very notably, then, much like Gloriana comes out of Faerie to aid the British nation against the "Paynim king," Philip II of Spain (Hamilton 138n7.2-6), in *That Hideous Strength* Merlin comes out of Logres to defeat Belbury (Britain as Babel),¹⁶ which is quite literally 'headed' by a Saracen!¹⁷

The above-quoted lines from Spenser's stanza 7, Hamilton argues, indicate future action, "presumably in the projected second twelve books, which would treat King Arthur's conquest of Rome" (138n7.2-6; see also Rovang, *Refashioning*, 81-82).¹⁸ It is clear from the quoted lines that when this victory over the "Sarazin" takes place, it will be with the aid of "that great faery Queene" (7.3-4). As I have written elsewhere, "Spenser's device of

¹⁵ Murrin writes, "Spenser would have known the [Old French *Huon*] cycle through its prose version (1454), of which there were many editions and an English translation by Lord Berners (1534)" [296].

¹⁶ Here we are reminded, as Boenig argues, that Lewis's Merlin is a response to T.H. White's "curiously ineffectual, as well as anachronistically modern" Merlin (121; see also note 9, above). Lewis, according to Boenig, "preferred a Merlin sculpted accurately according to historical knowledge, an agent for good in its recurring struggle against evil" (130). Spenser's Merlin, though not entering the fray as does Lewis's, prophesies the triumph of Britomart's line reflecting the Tudor dynasty through the reign of "a royall virgin," no doubt Elizabeth, who will "the great Castle [Philip II, King of Castile] smite" (III.iii.48-49). Hence, Lewis's development of a Merlin imposingly engaged in the plot probably owes more to Charles Williams's Arthurian poems, as Boenig argues (122-30), than directly to Spenser.

¹⁷ "The Saracen's Head" is Lewis's title for Chapter 9.

¹⁸ In the *Letter to Raleigh*, Spenser proposes that if his first twelve books are "well accepted, I may be perhaps encouraged, to frame the other part of polliticke vertues in his [Arthur's] person, after that hee came to be king" (715).

making Prince Arthur seek Gloriana" should lead readers to "expect a marriage at some later point in the poem" (*Refashioning* 88-89). This union would probably have occurred, had Spenser completed his grand oeuvre, at the juncture between the first and second twelve books, making the uniting of the realms of Faerie and of Britain integral to the final conquest over what was to Spenser and his Elizabethan audience the Belbury of their day, whose designs had narrowly been averted by the 1588 defeat of the Spanish Armada.

The poem's unfulfilled but anticipated union of Prince Arthur and Gloriana, therefore, stands as another high-stakes lover's quest on which hangs the destiny of a nation. In Lewis's final novel of the trilogy, the battle between Logres and Britain draws its front line directly through Jane and Mark's marriage, and, precisely paralleling *The Faerie Queene* in this respect, national, even human, welfare pivots on the success of the relationship between a man and a woman. We can now also discern this pattern anticipated in the search of Perelandra's Green Lady for her king, all the while Weston seeking to win her over to his party as Ransom strives to deflect his adversary's efforts and allow her to follow her uncorrupted desires. By the same power that there inspired Weston, the animated Saracen's head here requires that Jane come to Belbury. Filostrato emphasizes to Mark: "She also must be one of us" (175). The N.I.C.E. wants Jane not only in order to secure Mark's unflinching allegiance, but even more, as Grace Ironwood warns during Jane's first visit to St. Anne's, for her undeveloped but extraordinary psychic powers—and, Grace adds, they "will care no more about your life and happiness than about those of a fly" (67). This latter point proves graphically accurate when Mark learns that the N.I.C.E. police have tortured his wife with lighted cigars (218). With this knowledge, albeit requiring the aid of Dr. Dimble's reason, Mark finally decides to leave Belbury (222). However, the inadequacy of Mark's education, leaving him with no chest,¹⁹ and the previous uncertainty of his intentions, like Scudamour's to Amoret, have landed Jane in the torture chamber of a beastly sadist who reflects not only the Morgan le Fay of Arthurian romance²⁰ but also Spenser's

¹⁹ The narrator ascribes Mark's weak moral constitution as "a man of straw" whom "the first hint of a real threat to his bodily life had knocked [...] sprawling" to his faulty education: "It must be remembered that in Mark's mind hardly one rag of noble thought, either Christian or Pagan, had a secure lodging. His education had been neither scientific nor classical—merely 'Modern'" (185). Shippey aptly summarizes Mark's character as a man without a chest: "Studdock is glib, shallow, weak, half-educated, without inner resources of learning or character" (247).

²⁰ Lewis's name for Fairy Hardcastle seems to reflect Harde Roche (also called by its French name, Roche Deure) the castle to which Queen Morgan le Fay (Anglicized variant of *fee*, French for 'fairy') sends a shield with an ill-intended image to her half-brother Arthur in Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur* (2.554-55, 557), possibly conflated with

Busirane. The latter tortures Amoret by drawing blood from her for a spell “to make her him to loue” (III.xii.31. 2-6). The erotic pleasure the Fairy derives from torturing Jane, whom she calls “rather a pretty little thing” (155), with a burning cheroot, is comparable. As Spenser’s narrator asks, however, “who can loue the worker of her smart?” (31.7). So are the “straunge characters of his [Busirane’s] art” (2) comparable to the Fairy’s written spell to bring Jane into her power, the obfuscating hocus pocus of “official forms [...] a mass of compartments, some empty, some full of small print, some scrawled with signatures in pencil, and one bearing her own name; all meaningless” (154). Neither Jane nor Amoret succumbs to her sadistic desirer, Amoret’s rescue by Britomart occurring in the very next stanza.

In contrast to Britomart, Mark’s attempts to rescue Jane, like those of Scudamour to save Amoret, prove ineffectual because he is ineffectual. When he first learns of Jane’s torture and escape (from the Fairy herself, who blames it on an un-apprehended intruder), he departs, against the Fairy’s orders, for their flat in Edgestow where he expects to find his wife. Just outside the precincts of Belbury his path is blocked by an apparition of Wither, who has gained some ability to project his image at will: “And in one moment all that brittle hardihood was gone from Mark’s mood. He turned back” (189). Wither’s apparition to Mark is as Scudamour’s wall of flame (III.xi.21-27): a

Morgan’s unnamed hard-to-take castle that Arthur “hath repented hym sytthyn a thousand tymes” for having given her: for since then, “ever as she myght she made warre on kynge Arthure, and all daungerous knyghtes she wytholdyth with her for to dystroy all thos knyghtes that kynge Arthure lovyth” (2.597). A regular Dark Age Belbury, “this castell coude he [Arthur] never gete nother wyne of hir by no maner of engyne.” Myra Olstead therefore describes Morgan as “the first and strongest threat to the Round Table, and the most persistent one because, as Malory frequently reminds us, her castles cannot be taken” (132; Rovang, *Malory’s* 157, 165-66n1). Like both Lewis’s Fairy Hardcastle and Spenser’s Busirane, Morgan le Fay also takes delight in torturing beautiful women: “And by enchaumentement quene Morgan le Fay and the quene of Northe Galys had put her there in that paynes, bycause she was called the fayryst lady of that contrey” (2.792), writes Malory of a damsel delivered by Lancelot from *an iron-doored chamber* in a tower (cf. Rovang, *Malory’s* 161, 163). Amoret, too, is held within Busirane’s inner chamber by an “yron dore” (III.xi.54.7) or “yron wicket” (xii.3.3)! As Malory describes it, “the doorys of iron unloked and unbolted” at Lancelot’s approach (2.792), which remarkably resembles Spenser’s description of how “That brasen dore flew open, and in went / Bold *Britomart*” to rescue Amoret (xii.29.6-7). Why Spenser here calls that same door “brazen,” though beyond our focus here, is probably worthy of further investigation. But these details represent an intriguing succession of allusions from Malory to Spenser to Lewis that also suggest the latter two writers worked significantly alike, and that Lewis pays very close attention not only to Spenser’s poem, but sometimes also to the medieval sources behind it.

psychic obstacle. Both would-be deliverers are incapable of saving their beloveds because they are worlds apart from them in understanding.²¹ Prior to learning of her torture, Mark is fully prepared to bring Jane to Belbury as the Head has commanded, surmising, "They would kill him if he annoyed them; perhaps even behead him" (185). Mark is at this point ready to make Jane a pawn in the gambit for his own safety. Later, in the custody of the N.I.C.E. police and contemplating his imminent death, he realizes that his intentions for Jane had always been thus selfishly utilitarian:

He now knew, for the first time, what he had secretly meant to do with Jane. If all had succeeded, if he had become the sort of man he hoped to be, she was to have been the great hostess—the secret hostess in the sense that only a very esoteric few would know who that striking-looking woman was and why it mattered so enormously to secure her good will. (247)

Mark's incarceration and, as he believes, impending execution, motivate a process of moral and spiritual awakening comparable to that represented in numerous Spenserian characters. Jane is at its core, as both agent and goal, much as Amoret is for Scudamour: "She seemed to him, as he now thought of her, to have in herself deep wells and knee-deep meadows of happiness, rivers of freshness, enchanted gardens of leisure, which he could not enter but could have spoiled" (247). In what appears to be, gender-wise, an inversion of events in Spenser's Book III, Mark undergoes an attempt at psychological reprogramming in the N.I.C.E.'s "Objective Room" that very much resembles Amoret's conditioning in the House of Busirane. Not only the art displayed in "this long, high coffin of a room" (299), but its very structure, furnishings, and lighting are intended to force "the first step towards what Frost called objectivity—the process whereby all specifically human reactions were killed in a man so that he might become fit for the fastidious society of the Macrobes" (299), the bent eldils guiding Belbury's agenda. Daigle-Williamson observes that Frost's final demise in the burning Objective Room connects it to the flame-ringed coffins occupied by the Heretics in Dante's sixth circle (106; *Inf.* 9.118-32). Unlike for Frost, however, as Hilder points out, "The Objective Room, the intended tomb for Mark as a moral human being, becomes the site of his rebirth" (*Gender* 153), a felicitous irony that likens his

²¹ Britomart, by contrast, "Assayld the flame, the which eftesoones gaue place, / [...] that through she passed, as a thonder bolt / Perceth the yielding ayre" (25.4-7). When Scudamour, encouraged by Britomart's success, attempts the same, "cruell *Mulciber* [epithet of Vulcan, Roman god of fire] would not obay / His threatfull pride" (26.5-6). His reaction to this failure, in the next stanza, may be described as a pathetic little hissy fit!

experience to that of Amoret much more strongly than to those of Dante's Heretics and of Frost.

The art in Busirane's Castle is comparably intended to kill or twist the human capacity for healthy erotic love. The "hidden snares" of the arras in its outer room (already discussed above) give way to tapestries bearing themes of ill-fated love from Ovid, leading into a further room walled with gold reliefs featuring "a thousand monstrous formes [...] / Such as false loue doth oft vpon him weare," (III.xi.51.7-8). As Britomart makes her way into the innermost chamber where Busirane is assailing Amoret with his enchantments, she witnesses the Masque of Cupid, representing love's perils and sorrows in thirty allegorical characters (xii.7-25), entertainments to which Amoret has no doubt been relentlessly subjected. All of this art constitutes Busirane's programming to warp her understanding of love and finally win her through his spells.

Though Amoret, like Mark, resists this barrage of psychological conditioning, she needs Britomart's intervention to free her; Mark, on the other hand, has his own liberating epiphany. When Britomart forces Busirane to reverse his magic, "the house [...] quake[s]" and "that mightie chaine, which round about / Her tender waste was wound, adowne gan fall / And that great brasen pillour broke in peeces small" (xii.37.1, 7-9). Her heart wound healed, "perfect hole, prostrate she fell vnto the grownd" (38.9).

Amoret's release that will enable her to experience normal, healthy love is just as radical a turning point as Mark's experience of "the 'Normal'" in the Objective Room:

the built and painted perversity of this room had the effect of making him aware, as he had never been aware before, of this room's opposite. [...] Something else—something he vaguely called the "Normal"—apparently existed. [...] It was all mixed up with Jane and fried eggs and soap and sunlight and the rooks cawing at Cure Hardy and the thought that, somewhere outside, daylight was going on at that moment. He was not thinking in moral terms at all; or else (what is much the same thing) he was having his first deeply moral experience. He was choosing a side: the Normal. "All that," as he called it, was what he chose. (299)

In other words, Mark is gaining a chest, a development just as essential to his learning to love Jane as is Amoret's rescue from the distorted eroticism of Busirane's Castle for her relationship with Scudamour.

Jane is concurrently undergoing a moral awakening that has not so much Mark himself but her relationship to him as her husband at its core, again strongly linking her experience as well to Amoret's. Perhaps most

interesting, however, and a counterpart of Mark's illusory conditioning in the Objective Room, is Jane's disturbing vision in her room at St. Anne's, where, as she sits contemplating the possibility of Mark's death, a giantess in a "flame coloured robe" accompanied by several dwarfs enters from the garden gate (304-05). As this fearsome woman goes about the room touching objects with her torch, they sprout vegetation, all the while the dwarfs making a mess of everything, but especially the bed (305). When Jane begins to faint, Mrs. Dimble calls out, "What on earth is the matter?" thus breaking the vision. "Jane sat up. The room was empty, *but the bed had all been pulled to pieces*. She had apparently been lying on the floor" (305; italics added). This occurrence calls to mind Prince Arthur's dreamlike tryst with the Queene of Faeries: "And slombring soft [...] / Me seemed, by my side a royall Mayd / Her daintie limbes full softly down did lay" (I.ix.13.6-8). Recounting his experience to Una, he still questions "Whether dreames delude, or true it were" (14.5), yet recalls the tangible evidence that has set him on a quest of now nine months to find Gloriana: the "pressed gras where she had lyen" (15.2), which like the disheveled bed, transgresses normative bounds between visionary and conscious experience.

Ransom concludes that Jane has been visited by the "terrestrial [...] Venus—Perelandra's wraith" (317). Regarding the dwarfs, Ransom interprets: "You are offended by the masculine itself: the loud, irruptive, possessive thing—the gold lion, the bearded bull—which breaks through hedges and scatters the little kingdom of your primness as the dwarfs scattered the carefully made bed" (315-16). By virtue of this vision, Jane's self-preservation, reflective of Amoret's but driven as much by ideology as by fear, has begun to break down:

Now the suspicion dawned upon her that there might be differences and contrasts all the way up, richer, sharper, even fiercer, at every rung of the ascent. How if this invasion of her own being in marriage from which she had recoiled, often in the very teeth of instinct, were not, as she had supposed, merely a relic of animal life or patriarchal barbarism, but rather the lowest, the first, and the easiest form of some shocking contact with reality which would have to be repeated—but in ever larger and more disturbing modes—on the highest levels of all? (315)

Jane's epiphany here is the very essence of Donne's poetry on which she has been trying to write her dissertation. It is no wonder that the beginning of the novel finds her stalled and uninspired in that task. Mark's epiphany occurs in the perverse anti-visionary setting of the Objective Room. But Jane's visionary experience, strikingly reflective of Prince Arthur's, has now brought her to "the lowest, first, and the easiest" rung of the ladder of cosmic love, which St.

Anne's thrives on and Belbury has rejected, resulting in the latter's failure and demise. Candice Fredrick and Sam McBride comment that Jane "stands in between these two extremes, and she must choose one direction or the other: Mother Dimble or Fairy Hardcastle" (145). Although Jane certainly chooses in the "direction" of Mother Dimble, she will no more become a 'new Dimble' than will Amoret, for example, become a 'new Britomart.' In both Lewis and Spenser, human freedom and responsibility entail genuinely individual development out of real moral choices for good or evil, for love or selfish ego.

Following a rout of the N.I.C.E. and its operations at Belbury, with the descent of Perelandra (Venus), cosmic love overwhelms St. Anne's. The animals that have found refuge in this terrestrial ark, many rescued or escaped from N.I.C.E. laboratories, take a sudden interest in their gender opposites, and Ivy Maggs, Jane's former housekeeper, has her Tom back out of a N.I.C.E. correctional facility. Ransom informs Jane: "Your husband is waiting for you in the Lodge. It was your own marriage chamber that you prepared" (379). He half prophesies, half commands, "You will have no more dreams. Have children instead" (380).

Although he cites no specific allusions to Spenser, Sanford Schwartz recognizes the couple's final reunion as reflecting those of "the various kin and lovers of Spenserian and Shakespearean romance who have been separated by malevolence, chance, or their own folly" (137). While both Jane and Mark have arrived at the point of re-consummation of their union, which had before hardly been a marriage, their final approach exhibits a hesitancy resembling that of Scudamour in his final reception of Amoret. St. Anne's has become the Temple of Venus from Canto x of Spenser's Book IV. As Scudamour approaches to seize his prize, he recounts how, upon the sight of Amoret enshrined in that sanctuary, "my hart gan throb, / And wade in doubt, what best were to be donne: / For sacrilege me seem'd the Church to rob, / And folly seem'd to leaue the thing vndonne" (x.53.1-4). When he ventures to take her "lilly hand" (53.9), "*Womanhood*," in whose lap Amoret is seated (52.3), "did blame" him,

And sharpe rebuke, for being ouer bold;
Saying it was to Knight vnseemely shame,
Vpon a recluse Virgin to lay hold,
That vnto *Venus* seruices was sold. (54.1-5).

Even after upon his showing *Womanhood* his qualifying shield she allows him to continue, Scudamour relates: "euermore vpon the Goddessse [Venus's] face / Mine eye was fixt, for feare of her offence" (56.1-2).

As Mark approaches St. Anne's, where he knows Jane to be, many of his apprehensions about her are retrospective but call up the very misgiving that Scudamour feels about the "sacrilege" of robbing Venus's "Church" (53.3):

Inch by inch, all the lout and clown and clod-hopper in him was revealed to his own reluctant inspection; the coarse, male boor with horny hands and hobnailed shoes and beefsteak jaw, not rushing in—for that can be carried off—but blundering, sauntering, stumping in where great lovers, knights and poets would have feared to tread. An image of Jane's skin, so smooth, so white (or so he now imagined it) that a child's kiss might make a mark on it, floated before him. How had he dared? Her driven snow, her music, her sacrosanctity, the very style of all her movements . . . how had he dared? And dared too with no sense of daring, nonchalantly, in careless stupidity! (380-81)

The difference for Mark is his sudden present awareness of these incongruities, resigning him to "release her. She would be glad to be rid of him. Rightly glad" (381). This resignation itself, though, shows the magnitude of Mark's transformation: "For he loved her now. But it was all spoiled: too late to mend matters" (381). Venus, however, is of a different mind. Mark "looked up and perceived a great lady standing by a doorway" of Jane's room. It is the flame-wrapped giantess of Jane's earlier vision, this time "part naked," beckoning him enter—"He did not dare disobey" (382). Spenser's Venus similarly prods Scudamour, who cautiously regarding her face "for feare of her offence," she "laugh[s]" at, thus "emboldn[ing]" him to proceed (56.2-5). Mark enters to find "sweet smells and bright fires, with food and wine and a rich bed" (382), but no Jane—yet.

As Jane approaches this new temple of Venus, she has her own apprehensions, but they are about Mark, not herself: "How if Mark did not want her—not tonight, nor in that way, nor any time, nor in any way?" (382). These are not the self-preserving thoughts of the Jane from the beginning of the novel. She is free to give herself to Mark, as is Amoret to Scudamour upon her liberation from the House of Busirane. Spenser's 1590 edition ends Book III with the lovers "in long embracement" (xii.45.9) resembling "that faire *Hermaphrodite*" (46.2):

Her body, late the prison of sad paine,
Now the sweet lodge of loue and deare delight:
But she faire Lady ouercommen quight
Of huge affection, did in pleasure melt,
And in sweete rauishment poured out her spright
(45.3-7; 1590 ed.)

While Spenser alters this ending in his 1596 edition in order to expand the pair's story into Book IV,²² the 1590 *Faerie Queene* ends leaving the rest to our imagination as "those louers with sweet counteruayle, / Each other of loues bitter fruit despoile" (47.1-2). Lewis similarly ends his entire Space Trilogy by discretely pulling the curtain on the reconciled lovers. The sight of Mark's clothes carelessly draped over the sill of the bedroom window resolves all of Jane's last-minute doubts: "Obviously it was high time she went in" (382).

Hence, an epic of cosmic conflict ranging the solar system ends with the reuniting of lovers. For Lewis, as well as for Spenser, this latter is the goal, but it is also the way—or even the Way, the Tao, of which Lewis writes in *The Abolition of Man* (28). As we have noted, the battle between Logres and Britain manifests itself in the conflict between St. Anne's and Belbury, drawing its strategic front line directly through Jane and Mark's marriage. In this configuration Lewis's final novel precisely parallels *The Faerie Queene* in that national, even human, welfare pivots on the success of a relationship between a man and a woman. In the old model of which Lewis writes in *The Discarded Image*, reaching from top to bottom, encompassing all creatures, the cosmic harmony depends on a continual rebalancing of all its elements. The motivating principle, from Aristotle on, is love (113-15), making true lovers both its objects and its agents.²³ In this model, which Spenser follows and Lewis offers as a mythic image required by the present age, love not only restores individuals, but it runs the universe, and every true lover is hence, perhaps even unwittingly, a redemptive agent.

²² Lewis predicts, however, "no doubt in the complete *Faerie Queene* the original passage" from the end of the 1590 Book III "would have been used somewhere else" (*Spenser's* 36).

²³ "The Garden of Adonis," writes Lewis, "represents neither a virtue nor a vice nor any state of mind, but a cosmic operation. Yet it is one that concerns us all directly: from that garden we have all come. To it, moreover, we have all returned. For in our own erotic experience we participate in that cosmic operation" (*Spenser's* 51-52). He says elsewhere of the Tao, "It is the Way in which the universe goes on, the Way in which things everlastingly emerge [...]. It is also the Way which every man should tread in imitation of that cosmic and supercosmic progression, conforming all activities to that great exemplar" (*Abolition* 28).

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